

BOOKS OF THE WEEK SEEN IN REVIEW AND COMMENT

CRITICAL REVIEWS
OF THE SEASON'S
LATEST BOOKSNew Fiction by Don Marquis, Zane Grey, Elinor
Mordaunt, Constance Holme and Others.Books Set in Russia, West Africa and Glacier Park—
Mrs. Rinehart Through Glacier Park.Various Aspects of the War—Volumes 19 and 20 of
the New International Encyclopedia.

Copyreader Let Loose.

In trying to construct a burlesque on the romances of adventure in *The Cruise of the Jasper B.* (Appletons) Don Marquis has built better than he knew and has written a story that is reminiscent of Frank R. Stockton's tales and that keeps the reader excited and amused to the end. His hero is a copyreader for a daily newspaper, who has been obliged to suppress his craving for romance. He becomes suddenly rich, when his first act, we regret to say, is to tell the night editor, whom he dislikes, just what he thinks of him. Then he starts after romance; he buys a derelict craft moored in a Long Island creek, which he proceeds to refit. He gathers about him haphazardly processes as absurd and logical as any that Mr. Stockton devised a band of queer people, including an impulsive and attractive female. He fights a gang of malefactors with many of the devices familiar to readers of adventure stories, and even tries to cruise in his vessel. The reader is carried along by the story, regardless of the absurdities thrust in his way; even the love part is not made wholly ridiculous. The author must feel tempted to try his hand in earnest at best selling thrillers.

Western Bad Men.

That there is little honor among thieves is what Zane Grey undertakes to demonstrate in *The Border Legion* (Harpers). The heroine discovers that the glorious West is not so safe for women in reality as it is in fiction, falls into the hands of a band of brutal malefactors which hides in an Idaho valley, and is extremely lucky to escape at last with as little hurt as she receives together with the youth she cares for. The leader is a very bad man who interests her greatly; she saves him by shooting him, then nurses him back to health. He feels bound to protect her from his companions, but keeps her and the reader in constant suspense as to when he will give way to his worst instincts. The only tie that holds the men together is that every man's hand is against them; they attack each other when they get the chance. They agree to descend on a new mining camp, but after a while are betrayed by some of their number, flee to their valley and indulge in a lively battle of extermination. The outlaws are properly beaten and vivid; the wild country is described in a way that seems a little out of place amid her surroundings and in the story, but this is exciting and holds the reader's attention.

The Downward Path.

For some reason, it may be the feminist agitation, some of the women who write fiction in England have chosen to read the mid-Victorian

father. Among them is Elinor Mordaunt with *The Family* (John Lane Company), who is equally severe on the mother, apparently because she has eleven children who grow up. The family is well to do and aristocratic; why it loses its money is not revealed. The parents do not take the interest in their offspring that modern science demands; they are particularly negligent in instructing them in matters relating to sex. Moreover the girls are taught nothing that can help them to earn their own living and the boys are in a hurry to get to work. Even the youngest drink wine freely, which may be reprehensible, but seems to have no lasting effect. The author fastens her attention chiefly on one of the middle daughters, an impulsive girl, who is browbeaten into marrying a fanatical clergyman, and watches intelligently what happens to the rest, and on the eldest son, a dreamer with the making of a scholar in him but no force of character, who becomes a physical and mental wreck. The others sink into vulgar occupations, the more energetic prospering and the rest drifting. It may have been more difficult in England than in America thirty or forty years ago for young people to readjust themselves to altered circumstances, but so far as those depicted in this story are concerned it seems to be their own character that drag them down and it is hardly fair to put the blame on the parents, who behave as most British parents did then, or on the discussion of sex, which is a purely modern fashion.

Romance of the Firehold.

It is a striking story that Richard Matthews Hallett has written in *Trial by Fire* (Small, Maynard & Company). Hallett, with a hero who can be admired. He is a fireman on a freight boat on the Great Lakes, rough and brutal and filled with a great hate, which he overcomes. He has managed to get on his boat a young bank clerk, an embezzler, whom he intends to kill. Instead of being broken down by the hard life the boy pulls himself together, gets to see things in the right light, manages to turn the tables on his enemy and they become friends. There is a girl in the story, of course, and a melodramatic family history, but these do not ring as true as the deckhands and the firemen.

A Family Case.

It calls for great artistic skill to apply to twentieth century surroundings the supernatural devices that Sir Walter Scott used and to make an automobile faster when ghosts approach, as Constance Holme does in *The Home Coming* (Robert M. McBride and Company, New York). Back in the days of the Armada a Spanish gentleman drifted to the business of Westmoreland and married an English girl. About the same time a flock of Spanish sheep was taken from a wreck, and the breed was perpetuated. Every now and then in the family some member would revert to the Spanish type and be seized with a mania for wandering; and whenever there was to be a death in the family the sheep would come down from the hills and gather round the house. Two brothers, the last of their race, have come together in the ancestral home; one, a country squire, full of political and social business, driven by a very modern woman whom he admires; the other, the Spanish type, a diplomat and a sceptic. Over their up to date activities the author lets the mystery creep very effectively and poetically, the terror of the sheep and the attraction of the sea. The people are lovable and the

MOLLA BJURSTEDT
Author of "Tennis for Women"
(Doubleday, Page)

descriptions are beautiful. It is a noteworthy story.

A Dispenser of Cheer.

The juvenile Sylvia of an earlier book has grown into a young lady in *Sylvia of the Hill-Top*, by Margaret R. Piper (The Page Company), and is chiefly engaged in setting right the love affairs of her friends. While her cheerful optimism starts at first the strangers on whom it descends, it is never too effusive, and they adopt it gladly themselves in the end. The troubles she disentangles are interesting, and as she is not yet married herself, another Sylvia book may surely be expected.

A South African Farm Tale.

The position of *The Bygonner* (John Lane Company), who is the poor white, is more deplorable in South Africa than in the United States, if P. E. Mills-Young is to be trusted. In this case he is an Englishman, brought down by drink, and his children share his lot. The daughter is a beautiful and spirited girl, she gives her love to a worthless Englishman who abandons her, and she does not care to live any longer. She is loved by a Dutch boy youth. The development of his love is the finest part of the story; at first he looks down on her, then he is ready to break with his family and give up his inheritance for her sake; afterward he would serve her in any way and would avenge her death. The giving up of his vengeance and his settling down to marry as his family wishes is tragic. The drunkard's son works hard to better himself and wins the love of an English girl who draws him out of the dependent class. The author waves his wand and we find the Boers seem to communicate with all who live in the same climate.

A Spy Mystery.

The German spy fever has attacked Natalie Sumner Lincoln severely in *A Spy* (Appletons). Suspicion is directed to one particular person at the start, and his behavior is so ambiguous that even the explanation at the end does not excuse it. For the heroine it is difficult to feel much sympathy at any time. The solution of the murder mystery and the rehabilitation of the suspect are brought about by devices that are hardly fair in mystery stories. The one consistent person is the real spy, who alone acts in a rational manner.

A Napoleon of Finance.

Two solutions are offered by Charles Neville Buck in *Destiny* (W. J. Watt and Company, New York) when he gratifies the wishes of a poor New Hampshire farmer's children. One boy wishes power, the other is a musician, the girl wishes beauty. The author waves his wand and we find the first boy after a very few years not only a leader in Wall Street, but may be possible, but also possessed of refined tastes in many directions; the other boy is an accomplished musician, but has a weak character and is led astray by women admirers. The girl also has her wish and is imperious and tempted to marry for position, but she meets a man that she really loves and that redeems her. In spite of the author's objection to financial methods and the suggestion that his hero has employed improper means to advance himself, he seems to play the game as fairly as his opponents do. For some unexplained reason, he objects to his sister's marriage and then runs amuck. He creates a panic and at a critical moment

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MILES LEWIS
Author of "Chapel" (Doran)

meets with an accident; as he cannot attend to business he is ruined and drags down all his family with himself. This picture of the wickedness of New York and of Wall Street is the main part of the book. As an alternative the author draws a sketch of the shortcomings of middle-class Victorian parents, is Mrs. J. E. Buckrose.

Scientific Cruising.
The hero of A. Hyatt Verrill's *Marooned in the Forest* (Harpers) is thrown out of his canoe as it and his guide are carried over the falls in a river in some northern forest. He finds himself alone with the clothes he is wearing and with a handkerchief and a jackknife in his pocket to start his Robinson Crusoe experience. Beginning with his first cigarette, he provides himself with all he needs, food, shelter, the means of hunting wild animals and of navigating so far as required, developing intuitively the scientific knowledge of woodcraft that the author possesses. This takes some months, including a whole winter, but he makes his way to a railroad and civilization. It is an interesting twentieth century improvement on Defoe.

A Woman in West Africa.
It is extracts from letters sent during seven years by a woman missionary in the unhealthiest part of West Africa that we have in Jean Kenyon Mackenzie's *Black Sheep* (Houghton Mifflin Company). The reader will admire the author's pluck and constant cheerfulness; he may not always be able to share the affection she manifests for the natives who came in her way, and may suspect that some un-

A STORY THAT BURROWS
IN QUESTIONABLE SOIL

Edward Raynes in Louis L. Wilkinson's story of "The Buttoft" (Alfred A. Knopf) brings a great deal of experimentation to bear upon his business of being a searider. The author riddles his hero with a psychological curtain of fire in the beginning. What ever touched up against Edward, we are told, was bound to shake his cap and bells. A training imp of force insisted in being in him, though he did not at all desire to have it there. "His pantaloons impelled and grotesque ribald stirred him about on long strings, making him feel uncomfortable, a manikin now and then." It is likely that the reader will get a clearer impression of Edward as he goes on and learns how that softly enveloped soul expressed itself in speech and action.

We see Edward beginning the day. His age is 35. He stood before his bedroom looking glass in Sussex at the hour of 9:30. The description is particular. It has photographic interest. "Getting up in the morning was delightful to Edward. He took a cold bath, a luxury particularly well suited to people who are both sanguine and sensuous. After his bath he dressed rapidly till his trousers were on and then very slowly. In his shirt



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Author of "Father Bernard's Parish" (Scribner's)

without a man Friday and also without savages.

A Correction.

The author of *The Round-About* (George H. Dorn Company), recently reviewed in *The Sun*, another exposure of the shortcomings of middle-class Victorian parents, is Mrs. J. E. Buckrose.

STRANGE PEOPLES.

Kirghiz Kosacks.

The author of *Russian and Nomad* (Duffield and Company), E. Nelson Fell, was for several years in charge of mining operations for copper and coal in the Kirghiz steppes in southwestern Siberia, studied the language of the people he had to deal with, both Russian peasants and Kirghiz Kosacks, and came to understand and to like them. In this book he describes the people and their ways, with many anecdotes that are to the point; he describes, too, the country, with its attractions, its disadvantages and its possibilities. He observes with the eyes of a sensible man of business who can yet feel sympathy with peoples whose ideas differ from his; he admires the Mohammedan religion, for instance, because it makes those who observe it keep their persons clean. His tales are rather accounts of the customs and feasts of the Russians and of the Kirghiz and of personal experiences and adventures in a strange land that fascinated him. This is one of the travel books that count, for the author lived long enough in the land to know thoroughly what he is talking about. It is illustrated with photographs.

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pleased experiences and sights have been left out. The author was moved about the Guinea coast, in the German Kameruns and the French Congo, and even into the interior. It is the human side of her experiences rather than the religious work that we find in this very interesting record, though that, of course, is always in the background. Photographs illustrate the book.

Indians of Glacier Park.

The ethnographic ardor that led James Willard Schultz to identify himself with the Blackfoot Indians makes him an unusually competent authority to relate their legends. In *Blackfoot Tales of Glacier National Park* (Houghton Mifflin Company) he connects by a thread of narrative of experiences of his own and of others among these Indians the tales they tell, their traditions and their former customs. He deplores justly the substitution of commonplace names for those given by the Indians to the mountain peaks and other places. The book is illustrated with many fine photographs. Apart from its value as an ethnographical record it will be indispensable to visitors to the park, for it gives life and romance to the magnificent scenery spread before them.

What England is Doing.

In answer to the question of American friends, "If England has done all that she could" in the present war, Mrs. Humphry Ward has taken the trouble to ascertain the facts that would enable her to answer in the affirmative and has been aided by the British authorities in her task. Her answer is given in *England's Effort* (Charles Scribner's Sons), a brilliant picture of the spirit that permeates the better portion of the English people, of the things they are doing and of the courageous manner in which they are supporting the evils of the war. She minimizes the troubles that inspired the question and the labor agitation and the indications of unrest and dissatisfaction. Her last letter was written in the week of the Irish uprising, the Kait-el-Amara surrender and the outbreak in Parliament, but she retains all her optimism. The Hon. Joseph A. Choate writes a long preface in which he summarizes the contents of the little book and expresses his sympathy for England.

Mr. Simonds at the Front.

An account of a very recent visit to the French lines at Verdun made by Frank H. Simonds is contained in a small volume entitled *They Shall Not Pass* (Doubleday, Page and Company). Though favored by the authorities, it was a hasty and cursory visit which served chiefly to confirm the author's previous convictions, expressed in the volume of newspaper articles in which he explained his idea of the strategy of the war by day. His inspection of the scene of the present conflict will interest all those who are watching what is happening around Verdun.

In the French Banks.

The war impressions of an American who joined the British army as a private are contained in *Kitchener's Mob*, by James Norman Hall (Houghton Mifflin Company). The dominating theme of other similar records by the author's preserving his sense of humor and his keen feeling for the human side. The men who became his companions were wholly strange to him; he came soon to appreciate their good qualities, and the picture he draws of the spirit of the men who are fighting and the manner in which they accept the hardships is extremely vivid. It is an honest book with no attempt at literary effects.

Chalons-sur-Marne.

A very interesting collection of accounts of what happened in a district still ravaged by war operations, a valuable document for future historians, will be found in *La Guerre en Champagne* (Dictionnaire de la Guerre) (Fleury, Reims). This contains reports on what occurred in their parishes by many of the clergy of the diocese of Reims as well as more general accounts of particular forms of activity, such as the work done by Sisters of Charity, the behavior of the priests, how the refugees were handled and so on.

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Mrs. Rinehart's Ride.

It is convenient to join to Mr. Schultz's book the enthusiastic description of her horseback excursion *Through the Glacier Park*, written by Mrs. Mary Roberts Rinehart (Houghton Mifflin Company), which has more the character of a guide book. She formed part of a personally conducted cavalcade of forty-two persons which traveled 300 miles on horseback, and she tells of her enjoyment of every moment of the trip. It is a very personal account, which will make the reader share the author's enthusiasm. The little book is illustrated.

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out, of the work of the navy and army, of the steps taken for military, industrial and financial organization, is put in very clear terms by Jules Desreux in *L'Effort Britannique* (G. Van Oest et Compagnie, Brussels). The author also explains why England entered the war, and the relations between the kingdom and the empire, and ends by demonstrating why France should trust England. His explanation is so good that it would be of service if translated into English, as it shows what England's position is. There may be some significance in the appearance of the book and of the arguments for trust in England.

French Pamphlets.

The series of "Villes Meurtries de Belgique" (G. Van Oest et Compagnie), with its many illustrations, describes the towns as they were before the war, with occasional allusions to the destruction perpetrated. Antwerp is described by the Belgian poet Emile Verhaeren in *Antwerp, Malmes et Liège*, he contents himself with references to the other two towns, but adds two poems of his own on Antwerp and on the Scheldt. Both towns are well described by L. Dumont-Wilden in *Bruxelles et Louvain*.

In the "Pages Actuelles" series (Bloud et Gay, Paris) we have *La France au-dessus de tout*, edited by (Jacqueline) Nary, a collection of letters from men at the front. En *Guerre*, by Fernand de Brinon, a war correspondent's experiences; *Contre les Maux de la Guerre*, by Henri Joly, an account of public and private measures for war relief, and *La Conduite des Armées Allemandes en Belgique et en France*, a brief summary by Henri Davignon of the British report on German atrocities.

NEW INTERNATIONAL.

Two new volumes, 19 and 20, containing articles included alphabetically between Polk and Shilluk, bring the excellent and very convenient *New International Encyclopedia* (Dodd, Mead and Company) in its new edition near its completion and the period for its full use; the four remaining volumes should not be long in following. As we have repeated before, the characteristic of this new edition is the breaking up of the matter dealt with into short articles that can easily be referred to after the model of German "Konversations-Lexikons," and especially the inclusion of many biographies of men who are prominent for the moment at any rate. This plan of tending to present needs for information may make frequent revisions necessary; the service done to the public in supplying immediately and effectively the knowledge it calls for at the moment cannot be overestimated. It is the most up to date and convenient reference book that is now accessible. The *New International* should be completed by the end of the year.

A Popular Russian Writer.

V. Doroshkevitch, author of "The Way of the Cross," just published by the Putnam, is chiefly famous for his work on Jewish life, but he is a very popular modern writer and very powerful, using an ironic pen. He writes constantly for the *Russkoe Slovo* and is a great favorite. Through his pen this interesting paper even for him alone, and read his articles and feuilletons aloud. Doroshkevitch is a liberal and a progressive, but he is a real Russian and a Christian. "The Way of the Cross" is a narrative of the fugitives fleeing before the oncoming German hosts.

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